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ABSTRACT

Technology is changing the way literacy is being taught to adults, and it is also bringing new sets of problems and challenges for adult basic education programs. Some of the problems associated with the new technology include rapid changes in computers, leading to indecision in purchasing and uncertainty in use, and lack of appropriate software for adults. Other problems are not problems of technology but of literacy programs (such as turf fights and differences in philosophy), or lack of a cohesive curriculum. Many new software programs for adults are being designed, so some of the problems may be resolved in the future. The Gannett Foundation has been providing funds that may allow the development of programs in which adults have many options to learn, whether through a computer at a laboratory or in their homes, by telephone or television, or in person with a large group, a small group, or individually with a teacher. (KC)

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ADULT LITERACY & TECHNOLOGY
CONFERENCE PRESENTATION
JULY 30TH, 1988

TERILYN C. TURNER

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T Turner

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

It is a pleasure for me to be here with so many friends and colleagues at the second annual Adult Literacy and Technology Conference. The thoughts that I will be sharing with you today represent my views on adult literacy and technology: the past, the present, and the future. I'd like to begin with the present. And I'd like to begin by telling you a story, a true story.

Recently at the Technology for Literacy Center in St. Paul a notice appeared telling us that a bar would be opening across from us in the mall. We are located in a shopping mall and operate on shopping mall hours, which in and of itself creates some unique problems. Well, at first I thought that sounded pretty good. We could have our staff meetings there. The bar's name was Coco's. But then I began getting notes and messages from staff, students, and volunteers that they were very concerned about the possibility of this particular bar opening across from us. There was a history of violence associated with those proposing to open Coco's. So when a hearing was held at the city council to vote on whether Coco's should receive a liquor license, I went to testify. The entire proceedings were televised on cable television in St. Paul.

I pointed out that Coco's was located within 500 ft. of our entrance, which is in violation of a law on the books that says a bar may not open within 500 ft. of a school. The lawyers began thumbing wildly through their books and legal briefs. It got very exciting, and the debate that ensued among the lawyers and city council focused on whether TLC was a school or not i.e."Is the Technology for Literacy Center a school?"

The first part of the debate focused on our students and the fact that they are fuctionally illiterate. Are functionally illiterate adults entitled to the same laws and protection that children in the K-12 program are entitled to? Then the debate moved on to our center operation. After all we don't have classrooms and teachers, we have computers. The gist of the debate at this point was, "Is it a school if you use computers to teach people?" The result was one of good news/bad news. The decision was that TLC does not fit the legal definition of a school, therefore the bar could legally open. On the other hand, Coco's received so much community resistance that they withdrew their application for a liquor license.

I begin with this story because I think it illustrates a very important point made by Sherry Turkle in The Second Self. "Technology changes not only what we do and the way we do it, it changes the way we think about what we do."
Technology changes the meaning of words, so that "school" means "shopping mall," "students" become "learners," "classroom" becomes "lab," "classes" become "group or individualized instruction," and "teacher"...what does the teacher become?

Technology changes our lives in ways that we are only beginning to apertain. Dr. Enfente, Director of the Institute of Technology at the University of Minnesota said at a recent conference, "Technology is Ubiquitous." Technology is ubiquitous because it permeates every aspect of our lives and changes the meanings we ascribe to normal, daily events. Dr. Enfente gave the example of a french fry made at MacDonalds, which is actually made by a computerized food processing machine. The question is, is a french fry still a french fry if it's made by a computer?

"Using technology makes life riskier because you can't take chances without threatening the status quo." This is a quote from futurist designer, Sid Mead, and I like it a lot.
"Technology makes life riskier because you can't take chances without threatening the status quo." My point is that I think all of us in this room are engaged in risk-taking. We are risk takers, not because we are particularly brave or courageous, but because that is the nature of technology.

There are numerous problems for anyone working in the field of adult literacy and technology. First, you have to find the money.

Even if you know what you want to do and exactly what you need for your student, you still have to find the money to get it.

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Or you maye have the money and you get the computers but you don't know where to start with the software. Or you have the computers and you have the software, but now you don't like what you've got.

Or you bought the computers and the software, but now they won't run. You've tried everything but it just won't go.

Or suppose you've got the computers and the software, and you like it, and you've got everything running, but the teachers won't use it.

Or if you've got everything running and the teachers like it, now the librarians want to use it and they're not supposed to.

Or just about the time you've got everything running and everybody liking it, and you've finally got the lab set up, half the computers are stolen.

NO ONE EVER TAUGHT US HOW TO DEAL WITH STUDENTS WHO PUT 3 1/2 INCH DISKS INTO 8 1/4 DISK DRIVES

NO ONE EVER TAUGHT US HOW TO DEAL WITH STUDENTS WHO BEGIN GAMBLING OVER THE GAMES

NO ONE EVER TOLD US OUR STUDENTS WOULD BE WIRED TO SONY WALKMEN WHILE WORKING ON FRACTIONS

NO ONE EVER TOLD US HOW TO DEAL WITH CHEATING ON THE COMPUTER..do you know how it happens? YOU USE A POCKET CALCULATOR AND KEY THE ANSWERS INTO THE COMPUTER.

NO ONE EVER TOLD US IT WOULD BE AS FRUSTRATING, TIME-CONSUMING, CHALLENGING, FULFILLING, REWARDING, AND SIMPLY AS EXCITING AS WORKING WITH TECHNOLOGY IS.

MY CONTENTION IS THAT ADULT LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY AS IT CURRENTLY IS PRACTICED TODAY IS CONFRONTING MAJOR, CRITICAL ISSUES ON A DAILY BASIS. I GAVE EXAMPLES OF THE TYPES OF ISSUES I'M TALKING ABOUT IN MY OPENING REMARKS.
MY CONTENTION IS THAT OUR PROBLEMS ARE COMPOUNDED BY OUR NOT BEING ABLE TO KNOW HOW TO ATTACK THEM OR WHERE TO BEGIN, LARGELY AS A RESULT OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEM AND THE NEWNESS OF THE FIELD. WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST IS THAT SOME OF THE PROBLEMS WE FACE IN IMPLEMENTING TECHNOLOGY IN ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS ARE REALLY LITERACY ISSUES AND AS SUCH ARE ENDEMIC TO THE FIELD OF LITERACY AS IT CURRENTLY EXISTS. THESE ARE NOT TECHNOLOGY ISSUES AND SHOULD NOT BE THOUGHT OF IN THAT CONTEXT.

A SECOND GROUP OF PROBLEMS ARE TRULY TECHNOLOGY ISSUES AND AGAIN, ARE NOT UNIQUE TO OUR FIELD, BUT ARE THE FRUSTRATIONS EXPERIENCED BY EDUCATION, BUSINESS, AND INDIVIDUALS...I.E. ANYONE WHO IS TRYING TO USE TECHNOLOGY.

THEN THERE IS A THIRD, FAIRLY SELECT GROUP OF PROBLEMS THAT EMERGE AS A RESULT OF THE RARE COMBINATION WE HAVE MADE OF LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY. THESE ARE PROBLEMS THAT ONLY WE, SITTING IN THIS ROOM HAVE, AND IT'S WHY WE MUST COME TOGETHER TO HELP EACH OTHER SOLVE THEM.

LET ME TAKE THESE GROUPS ONE AT A TIME. FIRST, LITERACY ISSUES MASQUERADING AS TECHNOLOGY ISSUES.
THE FIRST ONE HAS TO DO WITH THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE FIELD. IN THIS ROOM WE HAVE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ABE PROGRAMS, VOLUNTEER GROUPS, UNIVERSITIES, COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS, CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES, AND LIBRARIES. ULTIMATELY, I BELIEVE OUR STRENGTH WILL BE IN OUR DIVERSITY, BUT AT THE PRESENT TIME IT IS AND CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM. HOW DOES THAT RELATE TO TECHNOLOGY?

TECHNOLOGY IS EXPENSIVE. FREQUENTLY IN AN AREA LITERACY PROVIDERS ARE FORCED TO MEET TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME AROUND THE ISSUE OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE PURCHASE OF COMPUTERS. IN ORDER TO APPLY FOR A GRANT, OR BRING TOGETHER THEY NECESSARY RESOURCES TO ACCESS TECHNOLOGY, LITERACY PROVIDERS HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER. SOMETIMES BEFORE THEY ARE READY TO DO SO OF THEIR OWN VOLITION.

IN ONE CASE I KNOW OF A COALITION FORMED TO PURCHASE COMPUTERS AND OPEN A BIG COMPUTER CENTER. ON THE DAY OF THE GRAND OPENING, THE PRESS WAS THERE AS WAS THE MAYOR. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN, A LOCAL LITERACY COUNCIL WHICH HAD BEEN INVITED TO JOIN THE COALITION, BUT DECLINED, MADE A PHONE CALL TO THE PRESS. THEY RECEIVED AN INTERVIEW ON THE SAME DAY AS THE GRAND OPENING. WHAT APPEARED IN THE PAPER THAT NIGHT, WAS NOT THE BANNER PUBLICITY EXPECTED BY THE FUNDERS AND LITERACY PROVIDERS SAYING, "GRAND OPENING, COMPUTER CENTER." RATHER TWO COLUMNS RAN SIDE BY SIDE, ONE WITH THE PICTURES OF THE COMPUTER CENTER OPENING; THE OTHER HEADLINE SAID, "LITERACY COUNCIL SAYS THEIR STUDENTS WON'T USE COMPUTERS."

THERE IS TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL FOR ONE LITERACY PROVIDER TO SABOTAGE ANOTHER AND CONSEQUENTLY ATTEMPTS TO SECURE TECHNOLOGY. THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL, SHOOTING YOURSELF IN THE FOOT. THIS IS A LITERACY ISSUE, NOT A TECHNOLOGY ISSUE.

LIKEWISE, I HEAR A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF "INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CURRICULUM" AND HOW HARD THAT IT IS TO DO. MY EXPERIENCE OF WORKING DIRECTLY IN IMPLEMENTING TECHNOLOGY IN 14 INCENTIVE GRANT SITES IS THAT FREQUENTLY WHEN WE GO TO A LITERACY PROGRAM AND ASK HOW THE COMPUTERS WILL BE USED AND HOW THEY WILL BE INTEGRATING INTO THE EXISTING PROGRAM, THERE IS NO EXISTING PROGRAM. THERE ARE TEACHERS AND BOOKS, EACH "DOING THEIR OWN THING" WITHOUT A CONSISTENT, COHERENT PLAN. THE PROBLEM IS NOT INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CURRICULUM, THE PROBLEM IS LACK OF A CLEARLY DEFINED CURRICULUM.

LIKEWISE, I WILL MAKE THE SAME CLAIM IN THE AREAS OF ASSESSMENT, TESTING, AND SOFTWARE SELECTION. ONE OF THE FIRST QUESTIONS WE ASK DURING SOFTWARE SELECTION TRAINING AT TLC IS, "HOW DO YOU CURRENTLY MAKE PURCHASING DECISIONS? HOW DO YOU BUY YOUR TEXTBOOKS?" IF THERE IS NOT A PROCESS IN PLACE THAT WORKS EFFECTIVELY TO PROVIDE CONSENSUS AND BUY-IN AMONG THOSE WHO WILL BE USING THE PRODUCTS SELECTED, WHY IS THERE THE EXPECTATION THAT PURCHASING SOFTWARE WILL BE EASY?

WHAT I AM SUGGESTING IS THAT THESE PROBLEMS ARE NOT CAUSED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF COMPUTERS INTO THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. THEY MAY BE A RESULT OF THE INCLUSION OF COMPUTERS...TRIGGERING OR EXACERBATING AN EXISTING PROBLEM, BUT THEY ARE NOT THE CAUSAL AGENT. RATHER, WE MUST WORK THROUGH AND WITH THE EXISTING LITERACY NETWORKS TO ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY.

THEN THERE ARE THE TECHNOLOGY PROBLEMS. THIS IS WHEN YOU HAVE REACHED A POINT IN WORKING WITH TECHNOLOGY WHERE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU NEED, YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR STUDENT NEEDS, AND YOU CAN'T GET IT. IT'S AKIN TO THE RUNNER'S "HITTING THE WALL". WE KNOW THAT TECHNOLOGY CHANGES SO RAPIDLY THAT DECISIONS ARE GOOD FOR APPROXIMATELY 6 MONTHS, AS AN OUTSIDE LIMIT. ALL OF THIS CAUSES SOMETHING CALLED, "TECHNOSTRESS." TECHNOSTRESS FREQUENTLY RESULTS IN POOR DECISION-MAKING AS EDUCATORS SUCCUMB TO QUICK FIXES AND FACILE SOLUTIONS, RATHER THAN CONDUCTING NEEDS ASSESSMENTS, LONG RANGE PLANNING, AND CONSENSUS GATHERING AS PART OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. HOW DOES ANYONE KNOW ENOUGH TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION?

WELL, RECENTLY WE HAD A DIFFICULT TECHNOLOGY PURCHASING DECISION TO MAKE AT TLC. OUR CURRICULUM DEVELOPER CAREFULLY RESEARCHED THE FIELD, CALLED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY TRYING TO VERIFY THE DESIGN INFORMATION FOR FUTURE PRODUCTION, CAREFULLY MADE PRICE COMPARISONS, AND THEN BROUGHT ALL THE INFORMATION TO ME AND SAID, "WHAT SHOULD WE DO?" AT WHICH POINT I WENT TO MY DESK, PULLED OUT A SET OF DICE, AND ROLLED THEM.

WHAT I AM ADVOCATING AT THIS POINT, IS "TECHNOSTROLOGY," SOMETHING WE HAVE LEARNED FROM OUR PRESENT ADMINISTRATION...A RECOGNITION THAT ULTIMATELY SOME OF OUR DECISIONS ARE BASED ON OUR HOROSCOPES OR THE ROLE OF THE DICE. THIS IS BECAUSE WE ARE IN A RISK-TAKING BUSINESS, AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL PROBLEMS THAT WE ARE CONFRONTING ARE NO DIFFERENT THAN THOSE OF MACDONALDS IN SELECTING A COMPUTER TO MAKE A FRENCH FRY.

THE TENDENCY IS FOR US CONSCIENTIOUS TYPES TO BLAME OURSELVES WITH, "IF I JUST KNEW MORE ABOUT TECHNOLOGY, IF I JUST KNEW HOW TO HOOK UP THE IBM MONITOR WITH MY TANDY COMPUTER AND THE APPLE PRINTER, MY PROBLEMS WOULD BE SOLVED." WHEN IN REALITY, AT THE PRESENT POINT IN TIME, WHAT YOU WANT TO DO YOU CAN'T DO AND THE SOFTWARE YOU WANT AND NEED, SIMPLY DOESN'T EXIST. IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR MOST OF US TO REALIZE AND BELIEVE THAT SOMETHING WE CAN DESCRIBE, VISUALIZE, AND NEED SIMPLY DOESN'T EXIST.

SO, AM I ADVOCATING THAT WE RELAX AND WAIT? YES AND NO. REALIZING THAT WE MAY HAVE HIT THE LIMITS OF THE TECHNOLOGY AT PRESENT IS NOT ALL BAD, BUT IT BEHOOVES US TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT WHAT WE KNOW NEEDS TO BE DONE.

WHICH LEADS ME TO THE THIRD GROUP OF PROBLEMS THAT ARE OURS AND OURS ALONE. THOSE ARE CREATED BY THE UNIQUE CONTEXT IN WHICH WE APPLY TECHNOLOGY. THE FIRST ONE I'D LIKE TO ADDRESS IS OUR DEPENDENCE UPON SOFTWARE THAT WAS DESIGNED FOR KIDS, NOT ADULTS. WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY IN SENSITIZING VENDORS TO OUR NEEDS . BUT WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO STOP REACTING TO SOFTWARE ALREADY ON THE MARKET AND PROVIDE LEADERSHIP ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO BE.

I THINK WE CAN COME UP WITH SOME PRINCIPLES OR GUIDELINES FOR GOOD ADULT SOFTWARE TO DIRECT THE SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS AND VENDORS. CAN WE ALL AGREE THAT WE DON'T WANT CLOWNS OR BUNNIES OR CHICKENS OR DUCKS AS THE REINFORCING AGENT?

I AM ASKING THAT YOU BECOME AN ADVOCATE FOR YOUR STUDENT. TAKE A MINUTE WHEN YOU RETURN THE SOFTWARE PACKAGE TO TELL THE VENDOR WHY IT WON'T WORK FOR YOUR STUDENT. IF WE ALL DO IT, WE'LL MAKE CHANGES. WE ARE DOING THIS NOW AT TLC & OTHER SITES. BUT IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR VENDORS WHEN THEY GET MIXED MESSAGES FROM US AND IN SOME CASES WE DON'T AGREE ABOUT WHAT QUALITY SOFTWARE LOOKS LIKE. IT IS WHY A CONFERENCE LIKE THIS IS SO IMPORTANT, AND THAT WE CONTINUE TO DIALOGUE WITH EACH OTHER ABOUT LITERACY NEEDS.

ANOTHER GROUP OF PROBLEMS THAT ARE OURS ALONE ARE THE UNIQUE ROLE CHANGES THAT OCCUR FOR LEARNERS, TEACHERS, AND TUTORS. ARLENE FINGERET HAS BEEN WRITING ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AND TUTOR AND CHANGES FOR SOME TIME. LIKEWISE, I READ AN INTERESTING ITEM IN "THE FUTURIST" NEWSLETTER STATING, "WHY COMPUTERS WORRY DOCTORS. SOME M.D.S FEAR THAT COMPUTER DIAGGNOSIS MAY CHANGE THE DOCTOR'S ROLE FROM ESTEEMED DECISION-MAKER TO A PARAMEDIC TECHNICIAN AND FOREVER CHANGE THE DOCTOR /PATIENT RELATIONSHIP."

I THINK WE ARE ONLY BEGINNING TO ASCERTAIN THE CHANGES POSSIBLE IN OUR WORLD AND IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF TECHNOLLOGY.

I'M VERY HOPEFUL AND A FIRM BELIEVER IN CHANGE AND OUR ABILITY TO EFFECT CHANGE. I'M SUPPOSED TO TALK ABOUT THE HISTORY OF ADULT LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY, SO HERE IT IS:

1. IN 1983 I CALLED JOHN HENRY MARTIN TO SEE IF A NEW PRODUCT IEM DESCRIBESD AS EXPERIMENTAL AND HAD JUST ANNOUNCED CALLED "WRITING TO READ" WOULD WORK WITH ADULTS" HE LAUGHED AND SAID THEY DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IF IT WOULD WORK WITH CHILDREN.

IN 1987 IBM ANNOUNCED PALS, AN ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM USING INTERACTIVE VIDEO DESIGNED BY JOHN HENRY MARTIN.

2. IN 1985 THE FIRST NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT SPRING HILL MINNESOTA. HOW MANY IN THE AUDIENCE ATTENDED.? IT WAS AN INVITATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR 50 PEOPLE AND THE PRINCIPLES I READ EARLY CAME FROM IT. INVITED TO THAT CONFERENCE WAS THE PRESIDENT OF HIS REPRESENTATIVE FROM CDC, IBM, AND APPLE COMPUTERS. WHEN I CONTACTED APPLE COMPUTERS, I WAS TOLD THAT ADULT LITERACY WAS NOT THEIR MARKET, AS EVIDENCED BY THE FACT THAT THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE HAD 5 VICE PRESIDENTS: K-12, SPECIAL ED, HIGHER ED, BUSINESS AND TRAINING, AND HOME OR PERSONAL. WE DIDN'T FIT.

IN 1988 APPLE COMPUTERS HIRED DR. JAMES KELLY AS ADULT LITERACY AND HAS COMMITTED NUMEROUS RESOURCES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT LITERACY IN TERMS OF HARDWARE, SOFTWARE, DIRECT FINANCIAL SUPPORT, AND CREATIVE IDEAS.

3. IN 1983 I WAS TOLD BY A REPRESENTATIVE FROM LAUBACH WHEN I ASKED FOR COMPANION SOFTWARE TO OPEN THE ABLE CENTER, "TERI, WE'RE STILL DEBATING ON WHETHER OR NOT TO PUT OUR TRAINING ON SLIDE TAPE."

TODAY, IN 1988 AT THE RECENT LLA CONFERENCE IN SAN DIEGO NEW READERS PRESS DEMONSTRATED THEIR VIDEO AND
SOFTWARE PRODUCTS AND OFFERED A COMPUTER LAB FOR TUTORS. AT THE UPCOMING LVA CONFERENCE IN NEW MEXICO, A SIMILAR LABB WILL BE OFFERED.

DO I BELIEVE IN CHANGE? YOU BETCHA. A WORD HAS TO BE INTERJECTED AT THIS POINT ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE GANNETT FOUNDATION. I BELIEVE THAT TECHNOLOGY AND THE USE OF COMPUTERS IS LIKE A WAVE THAT IS GROWING IN ITS POWER AND STRENGTH AS IT HURTLES TOWARD THE SHORE. NOTHING WOULD HAVE STOPPED THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS COMPUTERS, BECAUSE AS ONE TUTOR SAID TO ME, "ONCE YOU USE THEM, YOU NEVER GO BACK."

BUT WITHOUT THE INVOLVEMENT AND VISIONARY LEADERSHIP OF THE GANNETT FOUNDATION, AND SPECIFICALLY IN THE PERSONAGE OF CHRISTY BULKELY A LOT OF THINGS WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED. I WANT TO DIGRESS TO TELL THIS STORY ABOUT CHRISTY AND GANNETT'S INVOLVEMENT IN LITERACY. I CONFESS AT THIS POINT IT BECOMES SLIGHTLY APOCHRYPHAL BECAUSE I'VE HEARD SEVERAL DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF IT OVER TIME.

In 1983 GANNETT SENT OUT ITS FIRST CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO SUPPORT LITERACY PROJECTS NATIONALLY. A NUMBER OF THE PROJECTS SUBMITTED PROPOSALS REQUESTING COMPUTERS..NOT A HUGE NUMBER, BUT SOME. LIKE A GOOD FOUNDATION OFFICER, CHRISTY CONTACTED THE MAJOR NATIONAL LITERACY HEADQUARTERS AND SAID, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF YOUR COMPUTER PROJECTS? THE ANSWER WAS, "WE DON'T HAVE ANYONE." CHRISTY ASKED, "WHY NOT?" AND WAS TOLD," BECAUSE WE DON'T USE COMPUTERS." CHRISTY'S RESPONSE WAS, "OH YES YOU DO. YOU MAY NOT KNOW IT, BUT YOUR PROJECTS ARE WRITING TO US FOR FUNDS BECAUSE THEY WANT COMPUTERS.

• THROUGH GANNETTS SUPPORT, A PLANNING MEETING WAS HELD IN JULY 1983 AND SUBSEQUENTLY THE FIRST NATIONAL INVITATIONAL ADULT LITERACY AND COMPUTERS CONFERENCE. GANNETT SPONSORED FUNDING FOR THE ADULT LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY PROJECT WITH ITS GOALS OF:

1. To support the development of technology use in adult literacy programs, applying the computer's unique capabilities to the areas of management and instruction, and provide solutions for the national problem of functional illiteracy.

2. To create an effective dissemination network which will provide ready access to information on technology, including selection of hardware annd software, training, curriculum design, funding,, evaluation, and organizational recommendations for adult literacy programs.

NOW, IN 1988, WE HAVE

* A SOFTWARE GUIDE AVAILABLE FOR LITERACY PROVIDERS WHICH REVIEWS SOFTWARE USED BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS
* VIDEO TAPES WHICH WILL INTRODUCE AWARENESS, SOFTWARE, HARDWARE, AND TECHNOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS TO NEW TECHNOLOGY USERS
* A RAPIDLY GROWING NEWSLETTER
* 10 TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANTS AVAILABLE ON A NATIONAL BASIS
* A NATIONAL CONFERENCE, WHICH BROUGH US TOGETHER TODAY.

DO I BELIEVE IN CHANGE? YOU BETCHA! BUT MOSTLY I BELIEVE IN OUR CAPABILITY TO MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN. IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR ALL THE STUDENTS THAT WE SEE NOW AND ALL THE ONES WE HAVE YET TO REACH THAT WE WORK LONG AND HARD TO FIND WAYS TO MAKE TECHNOLOGY ACCESSIBLE AND THROUGH THE TECHNOLOGY PROVIDE ACCESS TO LITERACY INSTRUCTION.

AND NOW I'D LIKE TO CLOSE BY TELLING YOU A STORY. I'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU MY VISION OF THE FUTURE.

Once upon a time, not so very far away, a young woman named Mary had trouble falling asleep. She had had one too many cups of coffee at dinner and tossed and turned too long. Mary stumbled into the living room and snapped on the tube. Changing the channels rapidly, she found dozens of old movies and TV reruns, just what she expected at 2 o'clock in the morning. On channel 22 there was a show she'd seen before. It wasn't a movie rerun, it was one of those game shows. This time Mary stopped to watch.

It was a game where you had to fill in words in sentences and where the players got prizes. Mary played along and suddenly realized <u>this</u> was an educational show. She started to change the channel, but decided to play another round. It was a call-in show where the audience could participate by calling a telephone number. A number flashed on the screen with the message: Call for help, anytime day or night: 548-8324. Mary was curious, a little lonely, and knew she needed help. She called the number.

A voice answered : "LIT-TECH"; this is Joan. How may I help you?" Mary didn't know what to say.

The voice said, "Did you hear our song on the radio or were you watching TV?"

"Yes," said Mary, "I'm watching a game show, 'Spell A Word'".

"Great", said the person at the other end, "Are you interested in improving your reading or writing or math?" "Yes, I guess so," said Mary, "All of them!"

Joan laughed. "Well, why don't we figure out where to start and see what will work best for you. Do you have time to answer some questions now or would you prefer to talk in the morning? It will take about ten minutes."

"I don't really know what I'm getting into. What do I have to do?" said Mary.

"Well," said Joan, "First I need to get a little information about you and hear from you what kind of help you think you need. Then we'll be able to find the best way for you to learn. There are a lot of different choices."

"You can learn on your own through TV cable courses, or we can send you video cassettes for your VCR. You might prefer to work on a computer. In that case we can check one out to you for you to take home. Some of the instruction is on cassette tapes. Those are great if you like to jog or work in the garden or if you drive a

distance to work. Your learning plan can include any of those or a combination of them.

Mary said,"Wait a minute; I thought this was a school. Are you trying to sell me something?"

Joan laughed, "Well, in a way. I'm trying to sell you on the idea that you're never too old and it's never too late to learn what you want to learn. Why I'm taking some classes myself right now to improve my reading.

Mary was really confused. "If you can't read, why are you talking to me and if you can, why would you take a reading class? That doesn't make sense to me."

Joan said, "You see, at LITTECH we believe in lifelong learning for everyone and that includes me. We believe that everyone needs to improve on the basic skills of reading, writing, and math. It's just figuring out when and how to fit it into your life, just like regular exercise. We're all working on improving our skills in those areas."

We believe that learning is a natural process, made easier through technology.

Mary said, "Look, how much is all this going to cost me?"

"Well," said Joan, "It depends on the plan we design together. You can get all of your instruction for free, just like the game show you were watching tonight. But you might prefer to buy some of the videotapes or cassette recordings. Most of them are available at your closest 7-11 store."

Mary said,"Look I'm really embarressed about my reading. No one knows how much trouble I have. Not my husband or my kids. I don't want them to know."

"You don't have to. Everything is completely confidential. If we mail you information, we do it with plain blue wrappers. Besides you can also go to a class near you if you'd prefer. There are classes in every library and community center in the city. Do you know where the closest library to your home is?"

"Mary answered, "Yes, I do, but I really don't have time for classes."

"Joan said, "Time does make a difference. The more time you have the faster it will go, but you sure don't have to go to a class. You can use ROBOT-READING at the library or the interactive video programs at the bank. You can always join a class at home through our teleconferencing network. We have hundreds of classes that we offer 24 hours a day.

Another thing you might want to consider is joining one of our learner clubs. We have lots of learner clubs that talk to each other through computer networks and electronic bulletin boards. We have a cooking club, and a bicycling club, and a bridge club. We even have a night owl club. It's for people who can't sleep at night and want someone to talk to. You might join that one! Why they even have parties on the computer! You have to see it to believe it!"

Mary said, "But how will you know where to start working with me if you don't see me. I don't get it."

"We will design an individual learning plan just for you," Joan answered, "We can do that at any one of our centers if you want to come in, or we can do it by phone.

"By phone! How?"

"Well, we administer a little test orally and you answer the questions by hitting the telephone keys. We have another one that uses your television and again you answer by phone. You can help us decide which way you'd prefer to take the test. The test will just help us to get you started so you won't waste anytime. We'll also assign you a "coach" who will help make sure your plan is working for you."

"A coach! What will he do?"

"Well, most of our coaches are volunteers. Many of them have been a student or are still a student, just like you. They can come to your home, meet you at the library, or just work with you over the phone whichever you prefer. They want to help you find the best way to learn and there are lots of choices."

Mary said,"This is really exciting; I am definitely interested, but I think I'm falling asleep. Could you call me in the morning?"

Joan said,"Sure, just let me get you name and number and then I'll say 'goodnight' and wish you 'pleasant dreams.'"

I'D LIKE TO WISH EACH OF YOU WONDERFUL DREAMS OF THE FUTURE AND THE COURAGE TO MAKE THEM THE PRESENT.